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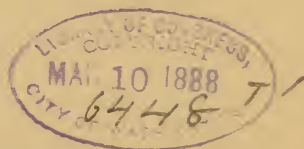
Twenty-three Answers
by as many Religious Teachers
to the Question

What are the strongest proofs and arguments in support of the belief in a life hereafter?

BOSTON

D LOTHROP COMPANY

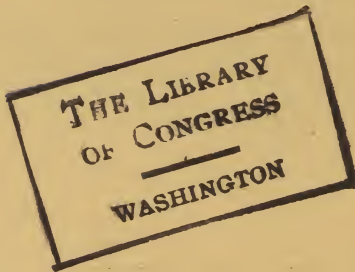
FRANKLIN AND HAWLEY STREETS



[1888]

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PUBLISHERS' NOTE.

THE BOSTON HERALD, recognizing the interest felt by persons of every shade of religious belief in the great question of the Hereafter, published in its issue for Christmas Day, 1887, responses by leading religious thinkers to the query submitted to them. The publication of these replies aroused so much interest that their issue in permanent form has appeared desirable. This little volume, published with the consent and approval of the BOSTON HERALD, comprises the twenty-three responses received, and the editorial that accompanied them.

P R E F A C E.

Three messengers to me from heaven came,
And said: "There is a deathless human soul —
It is not lost, as is the fiery flame
That dies into the undistinguishing whole.
Ah, no; it separate is, distinct as God —
Nor any more than he can it be killed;
Then fearless give thy body to the clod,
For naught can quench the light that once it filled!"
Three messengers — the first was human Love;
The second voice came crying in the night,
With strange and awful music from above —
None who have heard that voice forget it quite;
Birth is it named. The third, O, turn not pale! —
'Twas Death to the undying soul cried, Hail!
— *R. W. Gilder.*

"THE mystery of the beginning of all things is insoluble by us," said the great scientist Darwin, and in his doctrine of evolution he probably went as far back as any one has; but what most concerns us is the hereafter. "For myself," wrote Darwin, "I do not believe that there has ever been any revelation. As for a future

life, every man must judge for himself between conflicting probabilities." This eminent man confessed himself an agnostic, and the recent publication of his "Life and Letters" has called forth considerable comment on his views concerning God and immortality. Following is a quotation from a letter written by him:—

"At the present day, the most usual argument for the existence of an intelligent God is drawn from the deep inward conviction and feelings which are experienced by most persons. Formerly I was led by feelings such as those just referred to (although I do not think that the religious sentiment was ever strongly developed in me) to the firm conviction of the existence of God, and of the immortality of the soul. In my journal I wrote that, while standing in the midst of the grandeur of a Brazilian forest, 'it is not possible to give an adequate idea of the higher feelings of wonder, admiration, and devotion which fill and elevate the mind.'

I well remember my conviction that there is more in man than the mere breath of his body. But now the grandest scenes would not cause any such convictions and feelings to rise in my mind. It may be truly said that I am like a man who has become color-blind, and the universal belief by men of the existence of redness makes my present loss of perception of not the least value as evidence. This argument would be a valid one if all men of all races had the same inward conviction of the existence of one God; but we know that this is very far from being the case. Therefore I cannot see that such inward convictions and feelings are of any weight as evidence of what really exists. The state of mind which grand scenes formerly excited in me, and which was intimately connected with a belief in God, did not essentially differ from that which is often called the sense of sublimity; and however difficult it may be to explain the genesis of this sense, it can hardly be advanced as an argument for the existence of God, any

more than the powerful, though vague and similar feelings excited by music. With respect to immortality, nothing shows me [so clearly] how strong and almost instinctive a belief it is as the consideration of the view now held by most physicists, namely, that the sun, with all the planets, will, in time, grow too cold for life, unless, indeed, some great body dashes into the sun and thus gives it fresh life. Believing, as I do, that man in the distant future will be a far more perfect creature than he now is, it is an intolerable thought that he and all other sentient beings are doomed to complete annihilation after such long-continued slow progress. To those who fully admit the immortality of the human soul, the destruction of our world will not appear so dreadful. Another source of conviction in the existence of God, connected with the reason and not with the feelings, impresses me as having much more weight. This follows from the extreme difficulty, or rather impossibility, of conceiving this

immense and wonderful universe, including man with his capacity of looking far backward and far into futurity, as the result of blind chance or necessity. When thus reflecting, I feel compelled to look to a first cause having an intelligent mind, in some degree analogous to that of man; and I deserve to be called a theist. This conclusion was strong in my mind about the time, as far as I can remember, when I wrote the 'Origin of Species,' and it is since that time that it has very gradually, with many fluctuations, become weaker. But then arises the doubt, Can the mind of man, which has, as I fully believe, been developed from a mind as low as that possessed by the lowest animals, be trusted when it draws such grand conclusions? I cannot pretend to throw the least light on such abstruse problems."

Thus Darwin leaves us entirely in the dark. However, there is no doubt that every person hopes for, if he does not be-

lieve in, a future existence. What many desire is some more tangible proof of a life hereafter.

Thoughtful and learned men, in thousands of pulpits, are constantly urging and imploring mankind to prepare for life beyond the grave, and thundering forth warnings of the fate that awaits them if they fail to do so. To these, then, we turn for light on the great question of immortality. They declare a firm belief that, although a man die, yet shall he live again. As a presentation of the views of religious leaders on this subject cannot fail to be of great interest, prominent men in various denominations have been asked for replies to the following question, for publication: —

“What are the strongest proofs and arguments in support of the belief in a life hereafter?”

The responses are given in the following pages.

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INTRODUCTION.

THE clergy of all sorts of creed beliefs who have kindly sent to the *Herald* their reasons for the belief in immortality have rendered a service far beyond their expectations to our thoughtful readers, who may safely be estimated at a million for this issue. They have been asked to answer the question straight, — not to dicker with it, not to color it with their special theology, — and it is gratifying to find that members of the clerical profession, when compelled to say what they think in a quarter of a column, can say it so well and so unprofessionally. Most of these statements could be turned into editorials for the average newspaper to advantage. There is no verbiage, no wandering, no beating of the bush; they indicate, better than any-

thing else, the sterling quality of the ethical instruction which they are accustomed to dispense from the pulpit. The forcible way in which they state and justify the belief in immortality is one of the happiest illustrations of the power of conciseness and clearness in the statement of great truths. It is also an illustration of what the clergy can do when they stand for the universal consciousness.

There are essentially but two points made in these affirmations of the proofs of immortality. One is that the constitution of man implies immortality; the other is that the resurrection of Jesus Christ reveals it. It is best that each of these should be treated in their order. Fr. Hecker strikes at once into the heart of the subject when he affirms that "the human soul is a substance, simple, indivisible, immaterial, spiritual, having subsistence and life in itself." It is common to affirm that the senses and sensitive cognition are the permanent realities; but one can go only a little way in the knowledge of his own being before he

learns that the human intellect is "one of the indestructibles in nature, and the chief among all that exist on this earth." Rev. Percy Browne touches the reality of this spiritual hold on immortality finely, when he says of a man's faith as a pervading element in his personality: "It is because he feels an eternal quality in his life here on earth that he finds the idea of life eternal after death a natural, unspoken consciousness in his deepest self." Rev. George A. Gordon puts the case reasonably and truly, when he states that the strongest proof of immortality is that it is an essential part of the order of thought that is bound up with the world's life. He believes in the Christian interpretation of the universe. It is this largeness of view which gives one confidence. All the writers have some conception of it; but where it takes the form of a universal statement, it seems as if it had the effect of immediate conviction on one's mind and soul. Mr. William Q. Judge, the theosophist, speaks to the universal consciousness when he re-

marks of the continuance of life that the question of immortality could not be asked unless "man had an instinct intuition that such continuance is a law." The sincerity and breadth and strength of these answers give one the assurance that there is a degree of intelligent conviction in regard to the fundamentals of our religion, among our spiritual teachers, for which they do not always have sufficient credit.

It remains to consider the resurrection of Jesus Christ in evidence of immortality. Rev. Henry W. Foote says that "the proof which Christianity gives of immortality rests on a broader and deeper foundation than isolated texts alone, or even than the Gospel record or the visible church. It is in the whole spirit of the religion which Jesus taught, and the new spirit which he breathed into humanity." But there is immense power in the testimony which is given historically to the veritable resurrection of Jesus Christ. The testimony of St. Paul goes to show that at least two hundred and fifty persons were living when he

wrote his epistles that had seen Jesus after he had risen from the dead; and all the apostles sealed their belief with entire consecration to efforts for its dissemination as long as they lived. It is natural to like to leave the Gospel witness, because it seems to assume something beyond our immediate understanding; it implies a change from physical to psychical constitution in our Lord's personality that men cannot understand. But it is the affirmation of just this verity of Christ's resurrection on which the visible church of Christ is founded, and from which it receives its spiritual authority. Take away Christ's veritable rising out of the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea, and you have reduced the Christian church to the dimensions of a merely human institution, and given the lie to anything beyond man's instincts as to the reality of "our eternal hope."

There is a point to be noticed here which is of great meaning in the unbelief of the day. It has just been raised in Darwin's "Autobiography," and it is coming up all

the time in our experience of life. Darwin refused to act on his spiritual instincts and on the rules of historical evidence. He gave his life wonderfully to the processes of the inductive method, and dismissed from his thought the spiritual realities which it is the business of clergymen and others to formulate through the processes of spiritual law. This is also what is constantly done by the keen and practical intellects that are engrossed with human affairs. They give supreme attention to the laws of life, the laws of science, the laws of the natural order, and try to think of spiritual things by the laws that govern material interests. They are disappointed at the results, and give up in despair, when all the time their souls are thirsting for the message that God gave to men through Jesus Christ — a message which does not contradict the message that comes to us through the laws of the visible world, but includes it, as the greater includes the less. There is a profound truth in the remark of Mr. Judge, that “the body is only a small

portion of the man, and that, when the body dies, the man himself is not yet really dead; he has other organs, and other sorts of bodies, which have to die in their turn."

THE HEREAFTER.

AN INBORN INSTINCT.

REASONS FOR BELIEVING IN THE FUTURE LIFE.

I AM asked what, in my opinion, are the strongest proofs and arguments in support of the belief in a future life.

The first reason which I shall give for believing in a future life is that it is a human instinct. The vast majority of mankind have always believed in a future existence. So the Egyptians believed, as the monuments and papyri show, forty centuries ago. Such has been the faith of all the great religions, Buddhism not excepted. Such has been the belief of savage tribes, in all quarters of the globe. Such has also been the belief of sages and wise men, in

all ages — like Socrates, Plato, Goethe, and Emerson. This belief has not come from argument, or reasoning, or observation, but from an inborn instinct. Now, all other instincts, in animals and men, have some reality corresponding to them. The bee has an instinct for collecting and storing honey, and honey is provided for its food, and wax for its cell. Other instincts in man, such as the social instinct, that of work, thought, progress, are also provided for. If man has an instinct looking forward to a future life, and there is no future life provided for him, this is a solitary exception to a rule otherwise universal.

A second argument for the continued existence of the soul, when the body has been dissolved, is the absence of correlation between the two. While they are united here, the body is the organ of the soul, and they are mutually dependent, each affected by the condition of the other. But the soul does not decay with the body. After middle life the body begins to grow weaker, but

the soul still makes progress in knowledge, love, and power. In many cases the weakest body is the home of the most advancing soul. So it was with Schiller, Robert Hall, Dr. Channing, and many others. If the soul is simply the result of the body, this is inexplicable.

Faith in God, as Father and Friend of every child, such a faith as Jesus taught, gives us the greatest assurance of immortality. If earthly parents cannot bear to lose their children, and mourn over them while life lasts, shall the Universal Father allow his children to drop out of existence as soon as they are able to know him and love him? It is painful to us to cut down a tree which we have planted. Shall God cut down the whole human race, which he has created? In proportion as we believe in God as Jesus taught, it becomes impossible not to believe also in a future life. For God is not the God of the dead, but of the living; and those who believe in Jesus, and share his faith, lose all sense of death in that of a progressive life. The

central belief of the Christian church concerning Jesus was in what we call his resurrection. This does not mean merely his return to an earthly life, as Lazarus returned, but, rather, an ascent into a higher life, in which he still had communion with his disciples. He had not gone down into an under world, but had gone up to God, and yet was still near to them. As *he* had gone up, *they* would also go up. This was "the power of his resurrection." It abolished death. It created an entirely new faith in immortal life. It has filled the world with the sense of a heaven close at hand. This faith in immortality, which poured forth from Judea and revived the dying heart of Roman thought, has its only reasonable explanation in this event. The rising of Jesus is still the source of comfort to thousands of broken hearts. As we look up, we see the heavens opened; but when we look down, we see only the earth. Fully to believe in immortality we must live an immortal life. Then the eternal life abides in us. Then all things are ours,

whether life or death, or things present or things to come. Or, as Dr. Channing once said, "Immortality begins here."

James Freeman Clarke

Pastor of the Church of the Disciples (Congregational-Unitarian), Boston.

DEATH DOES NOT END ALL.

ORGANIC INSTINCTS NOT CREATED TO BE MOCKED.

It is impossible to give in a short letter any adequate presentation even of the outline of the reasons which justify the belief in immortality. Having discussed this matter elsewhere somewhat in full, under the question, "Does Death End All?" I venture here only a few fragmentary hints: —

First — It is no more wonderful that we should live again than that we should live at all. It is less wonderful that we should continue to live than that we have begun to live, and the most determined sceptic does know that we have begun.

Second — Organic instincts are not created to be mocked. Nature makes no half-hinges. "There is," as Herbert Spencer says, "no vice in the constitution of

things.” But the deepest organic instincts of conscience have, in all nations and ages, predicted rewards and punishments after death. Shakespeare recognizes the fact that conscience makes cowards of us all by the thought of somewhat after death. This prophetic instinct in conscience is not the result of education, but of the original structure of human nature. It must be that it points to reality, unless conscience itself is an organized lie. There is no example in nature of an organic instinct without its correlate. Wherever we find a fin we find water to match it; an eye, light to match it; an ear, sound to match it; a migrating instinct, a climate to match it. And so, from the existence of ineradicable, constitutional, irreversible instincts in normal human nature, leading us to anticipate rewards and punishments beyond the veil, we infer scientifically that death does not end all, for we cannot be rewarded and punished where we do not personally exist.

Third — The human physical organism

must be woven by some power not in matter. Modern physiology now asserts this in the name of the most advanced biological science. Life, in the physical frame, is supposed to be an immaterial weaving principle, a growth force, existing previously to the tissues it arranges. Organism implies an organizing force existing outside of it and before it and in entire independence of it. Reasons that cannot here be stated justify us in identifying this force with the soul. It exists before the web it weaves, and so it may exist after that web is torn up, and outside of it and independent of it. Organism does not begin all, but is itself begun, and therefore the dissolution of the organism cannot be proved to end all. The weaver that exists before the web he produces may exist after that web is destroyed, and, if God so will, may weave another organism, a spiritual body, adapted to the wants of a better state of existence. This reasoning applies to souls, which have individuality in the full sense of the word, or separate, personal responsi-

bility, and not to mere instinct or animal life. But the reasons for this limitation I do not here enter upon.

Fourth — The resurrection of Christ, as DeWette, the great German rationalist, himself admitted, can no more be brought into doubt by honest historic evidence than can the assassination of Cæsar. The character of Christ forbids his possible classification with men. The external and the internal evidences of Christianity prove the divine authority of our Lord. His divine authority proves the doctrines he taught. Among these are immortality, in the full sense of the word ; the necessity of the new birth and of the atonement ; his own deity and the eternal judgment for deeds done in the body. It is the Scriptures which bring life and immortality into full light ; but mere reason, in the present state of science, is able to show that there is no ground for believing that death ends all.

Joseph Cook

Author and lecturer, Boston.

“THE MOST REASONABLE VIEW.”

THE VIEW THAT EXPLAINS MOST, AND
LEAVES LEAST UNEXPLAINED.

JOHN STUART MILL, in his famous “Essays,” arranges the arguments for human immortality into two classes: those independent of the question of the Creator, and those that are drawn from the assumed fact of his existence. Mill’s own conclusion I have always considered the limit beyond which negative criticism could not, without assumption and dogmatism, go. That decision is that there is really no evidence either way.

According to Butler, atheism does not settle the question against immortality. For he says, substantially, that, having existed in this world without a God, we may exist in another without him. That is good logic, undoubtedly.

Most people, however, would affirm that life, either in this world or in any other, would be a burden, not a blessing, were there no Almighty Father to guard and guide it into ideal satisfactions. So that, while atheism does not disprove immortality, a rational belief in God furnishes the proof in its favor.

The starting-point for clear thought upon this subject has been well put in these words of Lotze, the German thinker : “That will last forever which, on account of its excellence and spirit, must be an abiding part of the order of the universe.” Emerson takes the same ground ; only, he goes further, and applies his final law to the human soul, which Lotze declines to do :—

“What is excellent,
As God lives, is permanent ;
Hearts are dust, hearts’ loves remain ;
Hearts’ love shall need thee again.”

The considerations which lead me to believe in human immortality it is difficult

to state as a series of proofs. They belong to and cohere with that whole view which I take of the world. To ask what proof there is of immortality — when one has denied or ignored God's existence, or what evidence there is for the same truth independent of Christianity — is, to me, simply a question of speculation, and not one of reality and life. I believe in the Christian interpretation of the universe. In my judgment, the most reasonable view that can be entertained, the view that explains most, leaves least unexplained, and provides for complete explanations at last, is that the universe has a creator and sustainer, this world a ruler and Lord, the nations of the earth a governor and judge, and men individually everywhere a Heavenly Father and Friend. My strongest proof of immortality, therefore, is that it is an essential part of this order of thought, that it is bound up with this interpretation of the world's life, that of necessity it belongs to this philosophy of the universe. The common arguments

from the character of God and the nature of the soul are only specifications of this general fundamental view.

Geo. A. Gordon.

Pastor of the New Old South Church (Congregational-Trinitarian), Boston.

THE HUMAN SOUL.

ITS CONDITION MAY BE CHANGED, BUT IT
CANNOT BECOME EXTINCT.

I HAVE been asked to give some of the best arguments and proofs of a future life. To do this with sufficient brevity, I must choose one or more among many arguments. I leave aside the proof from revelation. All who believe in Christ must be free from doubt on this subject, and I suppose it is for the benefit of those who have doubts that arguments and proofs are asked. Such persons desire arguments from reason, and I will confine myself to proofs of this kind.

Experience and science do not find in nature any such thing as annihilation and extinction of being. Modes and forms resulting from, or dependent on, organic or mechanical arrangements of parts or

elements are destroyed. But this destruction is not an annihilation. It is an alteration or transformation. It is a resolution of the composite into its component parts or elements, which are recombined in new modes of existence. In bodies, the first elements, the something, whatever that may be supposed to be, which is the subject of the action of force is indestructible. The elemental forces, also, are commonly said by scientists to be indestructible. So, even death is a change in the things which have had life, a dissolution, but not an annihilation. When a picture is burned, a statue is crushed into fragments, a violin is broken to pieces, there is no longer the representation of a landscape, the figure imitating a hero, or the musical instrument, in existence; but all the stuff out of which they were made remains. What has perished was the resultant, simply and solely, of the artificial collocation of parts in a certain form. What had existence independently of the art of nature and of man is not deprived of it by the violent

force which has undone the work done in and upon its substance. In organic beings, what is the result of the organization, what is inseparable from it, what has no action or existence of its own, not derived from or independent of the organic body, vanishes with the cessation of life. It is identified with the organic life, which merely vivifies the body and no more. But if the vital principle or soul, beside vivifying a body, has an independent existence, life, and action of its own, if it have subsistence in itself, intrinsically, not derived from the body or dependent on it, if it be a distinct substance, the mere fact that it ceases to vivify a body does not deprive it of its own inherent subsistence, life, force, and action. Its condition is changed, but it cannot become extinct, except by a direct annihilation. If the first elements of bodies and forces are indestructible, much more spiritual substances and their forces, which are nobler and have much more being.

The human soul is a substance, simple,

indivisible, immaterial, spiritual, having subsistence and life in itself. This is proved by the nature of its highest operations. The senses and sensitive cognition cannot go beyond the material phenomena of single bodies. The human intellect pierces through these to their immaterial ratios, and to ideas which are purely spiritual. It apprehends universals, being, genus, substance, intelligence, necessary truths, the first and final cause. This is a super-organic, purely spiritual operation. From the nature of an action we determine the essence of the agent. It follows, therefore, from the nature of human intelligence, that the human intellect is spiritual in its essence. As such, by the force of the preceding argument, it is one of the indestructibles in nature, and the chief among all that exist on this earth.

J. J. Hecker.

Editor Catholic World, New York.

A QUESTION FOR THE SOUL.

ETERNAL LIFE SOMETHING WE CANNOT ARGUMENTATIVELY DEMONSTRATE.

OF the doctrine or fact of immortality, the verdict of the understanding is, *not logically proven*. Faith in a future life arises, as a feeling or intuition, in certain states of mind, and those the loftiest we are ever in ; and it may be communicated by awakening in other minds, through a divine contagion, the same loving, worshipful, and holy states. Many circumstances, indicating how intellectually and morally unfinished the human existence is here below, may stir and lift the soul to such religious and Christ-like rapture as to resolve all our doubts. But eternal life is something we must be conscious of, and cannot argumentatively demonstrate. That great French scholar, Ernest Rénan, says one evi-

dence for the truth of a doctrine may be found in the nobility of behavior for which it inspires. The idea that man is an ephemeron does not kindle to great deeds or strengthen to any sublime endeavor. It was long ago said by Cicero of the Epicurean creed that it was to be utterly rejected because it led to nothing worthy or generous.

C. A. Mator

Pastor of the West Church (Congregational), Boston.

FACTS THAT COMPEL FAITH.

FOUR ARGUMENTS WHICH MAY BE DEEMED CONCLUSIVE.

PASSING altogether mere suggestions, symbols, and rhetorical illustrations, which are in no sense proofs, I mention four arguments, which, fairly dealt with, may be deemed conclusive:—

1. The physicist, so often unbelieving, ought, on his own ground, to cherish faith in immortality. The science of statics and dynamics convinces him that nothing is or can be lost. However matter or force of any kind may change its form, it is in no case destroyed. Now, there is such a thing as intellectual and moral force, as real as and no more impalpable than are light, heat, and motion. With this soul force we are as well acquainted as with any of the more subtle agencies in nature. If their

persistence is assured under all possible transformations, why is not the persistence of this soul force assured? This energy is not measured by the physical energy of its possessor. The athlete is not the greater man intellectually and morally, but often the reverse. Our soul force does not grow, mature, and decay *pari passu* with our bodily energy, but often increases while the body decays. If this continues, why should that cease? If earth abides, why should heaven perish? The physicist, standing on his own ground, should be a believer.

2. In like manner, the psychologist dwells in the midst of facts that compel faith in immortality. The constitution of the human soul contains absolute and universal spontaneities, known as *necessary* ideas. They are found in all ages, races, and conditions of men; ideas that are never learned and can never be forgotten; ideas that cannot be excluded from the mind; they spring up on occasion everywhere and in all men. Such are the ideas of cause

and effect, time when and place where events occur, the being of God, and immortality. The universal and necessary character of these ideas makes the very constitution of man affirm their objective reality. Cause and effect are realities. Time and space are realities. God and immortality are realities. All are alike affirmed in consciousness. Just as we rely on the divine testimony given through our senses, so we should rely on the divine testimony given through the necessary action of our intellectual and moral natures. The action of the senses demonstrates the realities of the external world. The action of the soul demonstrates in consciousness the reality of God and immortality.

By both these methods, any antecedent improbability relative to the truth of immortality is swept away, and its probability, not to say certainty, is established.

3. But to the masses of men, who are neither physicists, on the one hand, nor psychologists, on the other, the proofs from the Bible are far more satisfactory. The

wonder-working power of the Master was the "seal of his Messiahship," and attested his claim to the credence of mankind, as the signatures of the highest officers of our government attest the powers of our ministers plenipotentiary to foreign courts. So the common people interpreted them; so Nicodemus, a ruler among the Jews, regarded them; so Jesus himself urged them upon the disciples of John the Baptist. Now, Christ undeniably taught a life hereafter. He interprets the declaration to Moses, "I am the God of Abraham," etc., as meaning that, since "God is not a God of the dead, but of the living," Abraham lives. He said, too, "I am the resurrection and the life;" "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will build it again." He demonstrated this doctrine by the resurrection of Lazarus, of the son of the widow of Nain, and by his own after the crucifixion on Calvary.

Paul taught the doctrine with equal emphasis. See chapter 15 of the first letter, and chapter 5 of the second letter, to the

Corinthians. Considering his relation to the death of Stephen, the manner of his conversion, and his subsequent history, his testimony has great power.

4. A final consideration, entitled to no little weight, is the need of faith in a life hereafter to make this life tolerable. This hope is a necessity, whether one's thought centres on ourselves or our friends. Such a hope is not to be compared to the whimsical desires of men born of their fashions, or their appetites, or their pride; but it takes hold of the deepest and holiest powers within us. If future life be not a reality, it follows that the most tremendous of untruths is essential to the present well-being of every human soul. Such a proposition is simply incredible.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "A. A. Miner".

Pastor Second Universalist Church, Boston.

THE GREAT REASON

IS THE RESURRECTION OF THE LORD
JESUS.

PROOFS of immortality : —

1. The persistent and universal belief in a hereafter.

2. The consciousness that we are something somehow different and other than the body which we inhabit and which must die.

3. The continuity of our personality. The body continually changes. We remain — the argument is strong that we shall still remain when at last the body altogether ceases.

4. The fact that man does not here reach, manifestly, the full development of his powers.

5. The ethical reason. The balances do not swing evenly here. They must some-

where, or all our sense of right and wrong is a deception.

6. The great reason is the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. That is the impregnable reason.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Weyland Hayes". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned centrally below the main text.

Pastor of the Memorial Baptist Church, Philadelphia.

THE TEACHING OF OUR LORD

AND THE UNIVERSAL AND CONSTANT BELIEF OF ALL CHRISTIAN AGES.

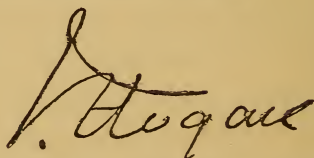
I REGRET to say that I find it impossible to write at any length in answer to the question you propose. If a bare statement could in any way meet your object, I would simply observe : —

1. That Catholics, like all Christians, believe in an after-life, principally because such is the clear, emphatic, reiterated teaching of our Lord and his apostles all through the New Testament, and because it has been the universal and constant belief of all Christian ages.

2. That, even outside the teachings of their faith, they are led to the same conviction, and confirmed in it, by the intuitions of their moral sense, by the cravings of their whole spiritual nature ; more still, by their belief in a personal God, supremely

just and wise, a belief with which that of a future existence has been invariably bound up in the minds of men; that they are confirmed in it by their failing to see how, without it, society could develop harmoniously, progress, or even permanently hold together. In a word, recognizing the real though very unequal value of the reasons given to the world in support of that doctrine, from Plato down to Descartes, Fénelon, and McCosh, they accept the teaching of the Gospel as that of reason itself.

These grounds are common to all Christians, yet Catholics, as a rule, *realize more fully* than most others the all-important fact of a future existence. This comes from the greater fulness of Catholic teaching, the greater firmness of Catholic faith, and from various other reasons, on which, I regret, I have not time to enter.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "J. H. G. O'Connell". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and "O".

President of St. John's Seminary (Catholic), Brighton,
Mass.

BELIEF INDEPENDENT OF PROOF.

NO PROOFS OF A LIFE HEREAFTER — WAS
THERE LIFE HERETOFORE ?

IN response to your question, “What are the strongest proofs and arguments in support of the belief in a life hereafter?” permit me to express myself as follows:—

Belief is independent of proof. Independence of proof has ever been one of the essentials of belief. As soon as the identity of sensation with reality is established, — that is, as soon as the truth of a thing is proven, — we cease to believe. Certainty or proof destroys and does not support belief. The belief in a life hereafter stands, therefore, and must stand, without the support of proof. If an existence of life after death could be proven, we would no longer believe it — it would be certainty.

There are no proofs of a life hereafter, and, therefore, we cling to the belief. Past

generations knew as little about it as does the present, and I doubt whether the dark veil will ever be lifted. Biblical quotations in support of such a belief are no proofs; they prove not more, if they prove anything, than that people have yearned for a future existence in the past as they do to-day, and that we have no conception of non-existence. All proofs drawn from biblical sources are far-fetched, and to the unbiassed reader of the Old Testament it becomes plain as sunlight that its writers imagined the hereafter far different than we do, and that their explanations turned rather around resurrection than around a spiritual kind of existence after death.

Neither does science afford us any proofs. Permit me, therefore, to drop the first part of your question, and to turn to the second part.

Arguments in support of a belief in a life hereafter are plentiful. Every philosophical school has produced some. The best arguments which I have ever read in support of the belief in immortality are con-

tained in Mendelssohn's "Phædon," and all arguments which I could bring forth would be a repetition of those so masterly elucidated by the great philosopher. If I am, however, to add an argument, I would only speak of that which supports my belief in a life hereafter, and which is strong enough to drive from me individually the natural fear and dread of non-existence. I believe that not only is man, but every creature, a dual being: if I may properly use the expression, mind chained to matter, or matter saturated with mind. What their true relations are to each other, I can as little tell as anybody else. Nobody has so far as yet demonstrated it beyond doubt where the seat of mind is, or by what ties it is held to matter.

In the glance of the eye, however, as well as in many other ways, we become conscious of the existence of a something which not only gives vitality to matter, but which is its directing and governing force. We become conscious of it that our individuality is not made up by our body

merely, but by something else, for which we shall ever fail to find the right expression. We may as well call it mind or soul or spirit, though none of these names will cover it. Observation has taught us that matter is indestructible; that death is merely a change of form in so far as matter is concerned. Why, then, should the still finer part of our being be subject to annihilation? Why should mind not be as indestructible as matter? Why should, furthermore, that indestructible love for existence and that insuppressible fear of non-existence be so strongly intertwined with all our thoughts and actions, if there was not some reality behind it? No, our hopes cannot be disappointed; mind is as indestructible at death as is matter, and that which thinks, feels, and wills in me will remain, must remain, as do the elements of which my body is composed. So far, but not farther, will arguments carry me.

To believe in immortality is one thing, and to describe it is quite another. In

what form this future existence will manifest itself to our consciousness, or whether our individuality will be preserved, who can tell? Here we touch the realms of imagination, and reason must fold up its wings.

The longevity, if not the immortality, of thoughts and actions within humanity may also be called a hereafter; but your question did not allude to such a life after death. I refrain, therefore, from touching it. Considering the possibility and probability, or, let me even say, certainty, of a life hereafter, we ought not to lose sight of the life heretofore. If there is a hereafter, logically there must have been a life heretofore. Our body contains surely material which has been previously employed in forming the substance of some being; is that which is possible in regard to matter impossible in regard to mind? We know nothing of a previous life, it is true, and we care little about it, because it is the future and not the past which stirs our hopes and fears, but is it not as probable

that we shall drink from the waters of the river Lethe before entering the hereafter, and become thus unconscious of the conditions in which we have lived here?

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "S. Schneider." The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed text.

*Rabbi Temple Adath Israel (Reformed Jewish Church),
Boston.*

THE SPIRITUAL WORLD.

VIEW OF THE SUBJECT OF A FUTURE EXISTENCE.

IF we bear in mind that the rationality and liberty of man enable him to confirm whatever he will, and that men's natural faculties are more apt to deny than affirm the truth of phenomena which lie outside and above them, we shall not expect impossible results of any effort to find "proofs" of the belief in a life hereafter. Spiritism itself, with all its "tests," is unable to compel a belief in immortality, or secure its "communications" and "materializations" from being regarded with incredulity by many. "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead." According to this principle, faith in the soul's immortality cannot be made dependent upon merely sensuous evidence. And when, as

has so often been done, we appeal to science as to some authorized judge, we are carrying the problem where it does not belong ; trying to bring the soul within focal distance of lenses which were never fashioned to discern it ; and clamoring for a kind of evidence which, in the very nature of the case, is an impossibility, or, if possible, would be fatal to our hopes. For, evidently, if science could discern and handle spirit, she would not thereby prove the soul's immortality, but, quite the contrary, that what we have called "spirit" is, after all, only a refined form of matter, which must prove perishable in the end. The soul, if it exist at all, is by nature and by environment *spiritual*. To know certainly of its existence, therefore, we must appeal to some spiritual authority or witness, namely, revelation, which affirms our immortality as a fact supersensibly made known to the soul itself, attested by yearnings which are as prophets' voices, and by holy anticipations which are the fore-gleams of a heavenly world.

But, the fact of immortality being once revealed, the evidences of its truthfulness become abundant. In the small amount of space at command, these can be but little more than stated.

1. Nature, in every part of her wide domain, reveals evidences of design, and in so far of the existence of a creative mind or being, to whom man is spiritually united. She also exhibits processes which afford many resemblances to a resurrection—such as the resurrection of the moth from the grave of the chrysalis, the return of freshness and beauty in spring after the frosts of winter.

2. The traditions of universal belief in a resurrection point to its reality. What all men believe, and continue to believe from age to age, is certainly not to be cast lightly aside.

3. Accompanying this universal belief are irrepressible longings for a life beyond the grave. Is it likely that a desire so deep-seated is incapable of fulfilment? All other longings, bodily and mental, such as

food, strength, intelligence, love, find means by which they may be more or less gratified. Does humanity long for eternal life in vain?

4. The nature of man is in itself an indication of a higher world, in which that nature can attain its full development. He has planes and degrees of thought and affection which are *super-natural*, and which require a supernatural world for their best expression. It is in his power to look down upon lower grades of thought and feeling in himself; to study them—a fact which demonstrates the existence of mental faculties which lie wholly above the things which are of time and space.

5. Many of his experiences, also, are of a distinctly spiritual character. There are moments in the life of every noble man when he feels the presence of God. And he feels it by the flowing-in of holy influences, which bring a peace that passeth all understanding. When a man puts away some evil as sin, when he denies himself for the sake of another, there comes to him a

sense of peace and interior blessedness which the world cannot give, and which is a testimony that he enjoys communion with God, which is life eternal.

6. From time to time in the world's history, there have been well authenticated cases of intromission into the spiritual world. Our common faith is based on a revelation which contains many such instances. Both the Old and the New Testaments frequently reveal to us the existence of spirits and angels. Those who are convinced of the truthfulness of the teachings made known through Swedenborg regard his experiences as not less wonderful and in accordance with the divine purpose than those granted to John the Revelator, Paul, and others.

7. But the supreme fact of all is the resurrection of the Saviour of mankind. The risen Christ is the fact on which the church is built. Without it there could have been no church. It is the truth which more than any other the apostles and early followers boldly preached, and which no form

of persecution could crush. He whose life was one of self-sacrifice ; who endured scorn and persecution in silence ; who laid down his life without a murmur, telling his followers that he would rise again, — all this, which, even now, shines so beautiful and clear, suddenly gives way if the resurrection be not a fact. Accepted as a fact, no man need doubt the truth that “God is not a God of the dead, but of the living,” nor fear to enter the Valley of the Shadow of Death under the guidance of Him who is “the Resurrection and the Life.”

Julian K. Smyth.

*Pastor of the Roxbury Church of the New Jerusalem
(Swedenborgian).*

THE ARC TO BE MADE A CIRCLE.

WRONGS TO BE RIGHTED — THE FUTURE AS
REAL AS THE PRESENT OR THE PAST.

I CONSIDER the expectation of deathlessness an innate idea. Man has never been found without it. It is, therefore, an essential part of things that are. The future is as real as the present or the past. In fact, there is no "future," nor "present," nor "past." These are but names of conditions. Man simply is alive and ever alive. "The hereafter" is a convenient name only. Such universal assent of all men, in all eras and places, makes "life hereafter" as certain as the universal assent of the present consciousness that we are makes existence now a certainty. The Bible corroborates this essential idea, illus-

trates it, and teaches us the methods of that life.

Man's moral sense is admitted to be the most exalted fact in his being; and the moral sense demands another world in which the wrongs of this are to be righted — the arc to be made a circle. The Bible is true to us because it promises this.

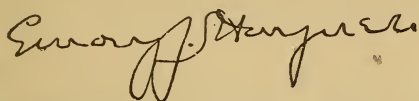
Man's reason demands the satisfaction of a conclusion of his life's logic; here we get but the two premises.

Man's affections demand the same. When conscience, reason, and love are content to end at the grave, man is no longer of sound mind. That is insanity — one form of it.

Faith is but the assertion of these positions, or, as the Scriptures say, "the substance of things hoped for." Faith is life. Despair is death. Faith is natural. Despair is unnatural, or disease, or, as I said, insanity.

Jesus Christ's career, taken all in all, is a photograph of humanity. He was born, suffered, worked, enjoyed, died, and

rose again. He "ever liveth." He becomes the argument incarnate, or made visible.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Emory J. Sturges". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned centrally below the main text block.

Pastor of the Union Temple Baptist Church, Boston.

EFFECT OF SCIENTIFIC PROGRESS.

CHRIST AND ALL GREAT RELIGIOUS LEADERS
INCREASED IN IMPORTANCE.

As to "proofs" of a future life, I feel a difficulty in answering your question. It seems to me that a saying of Dr. Martineau, which I can only quote from memory, goes to the root of that matter, viz., that "man does not believe in immortality because he has ever proved it, but he is ever trying to prove it because he cannot help believing it." Nature does not *prove* it, but *originates* it, and originates it in such universal connection with man's upward progress as assures us that it is not any "twist" or abnormal product in the growth of humanity, but a part of the great orderly development of our race, and therefore reliable.

I think man's whole intellectual and affectional capacities point toward a larger

scope than any afforded by the present life: but most imperatively of all I find this in the consideration of man's moral nature. This impels men to endeavors which, on earth, are never satisfied, never reach any conclusion; which, the nobler they are, only the more imperfect are they in any earthly attainment of them. It sets man striving onward in ways in which, the further he goes, the more he feels that here he is only at the beginning of things. The most meagre sense of justice and right makes us conscious that man's earthly life is, morally regarded, only a fragment. Justice does not get accomplished. Conscience impels us to believe in certain moral sequences, but those sequences are seldom completed here. It is not that a future life is needed for compensation, but for the working-out of that moral completeness which the present seldom brings.

I think that thus nature, especially where it comes to its highest and clearest meaning in man, is full of suggestions of

immortality ; but, after all, that which caps and crowns all and lifts it into a quiet certainty is the thought and teaching of Christ. The fact is — and it is a very important point, which I do not think has been sufficiently noticed — that the real effect of the scientific progress of our time has been to make, not Christ only, but all the great religious leaders of the world, of more importance now than ever, not less. Because a while ago many imagined that science was going to supply the exact truth in moral and religious things as in material things. But they find it cannot. It can tell us about substances and forces, though even before it has got half-way through these it is among things which elude its grasp and are as impalpable as soul or God. But when we go to science to ask about right and kindness, and love and reverence, it is absolutely powerless. It cannot deny that these *are*, but simply can tell us nothing about them. In the whole interpretation of this higher life, science cannot help us,

and admits that it cannot. And so we are thrown back with a new interest upon the developments of that side of our being, upon the great masters of spiritual life, and most of all on Christ. In him I feel that we have the most perfect expression of that divine meaning which is embodied in the universe. And so in this matter of the life to come, when I have thought and thought, and sometimes become dazed with thinking, I turn to Christ. I see how his teachings are alive with this feeling of immortality, how he could never think of death except as a falling asleep or as going to the Father. There I finally rest. Humanity, at its highest, where it seems consciously to touch the divine, utters the same thought which speaks in the dumb instincts of human nature at its lowest — that this life is not all, that man is to live again.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Brooke Wierford". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned centrally below the main text.

Pastor of the Arlington Street Church (Congregational-Unitarian), Boston.

MUST BE ANOTHER CHAPTER.

NO SUCH THING AS THE EXTINCTION OF
THE SOUL POSSIBLE.

THE request for the strongest arguments in support of the belief in a future life cannot be satisfactorily answered in a few sentences, and, while I feel that I can hardly say anything new upon the subject, I am not willing to let such a request as this pass without doing my best by way of a response. Why do I believe in man's deathlessness?

I. In the first place, then, because of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is a historic fact, to the clear proof of which it is now impossible to add anything, that a man has passed through the experience called death with life continuous and unimpaired. That death did not bring to an

end the separate individual existence of the man Jesus of Nazareth, but only liberated that life into larger conditions, the world-filling fact of Christianity is to-day the clear evidence. For Christianity has grown, not out of the dead and buried Christ, but out of the dead and buried and risen Christ. "Jesus and the Resurrection" was the inscription upon the banner carried by the first apostles of the Christian church. That fact was the one sign by which they conquered; that the man Jesus, in dying, had simply changed the mode of his existence, and that he had made this infallibly certain by his repeated reappearances, was the fact which they everywhere preached, and in attestation of which they were willing to peril their own mortal lives — yea, glad, if need were, to lay them down under whatever form of torture, assured that they could not be extinguished, but would rise up triumphant into the glorious conditions of his life. I feel downward toward the roots of this great world-filling plant, and I find there, as the sole spring and only ex-

planation of its existence, not a doctrine, not a theory, not a system of theology or philosophy, but a fact,—the fact of one life that was unextinguished by what men call death,—and I say with the early apostles: “If Christ be risen from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead?”

II. I turn next to Christ’s representation of the relations existing between God and man. What Christ taught us of the nature of God and of his relations to man forbids us to believe that man goes out of existence at death—unless, indeed, we can adopt the self-contradictory supposition that God himself may cease to exist. Christ came proclaiming a gospel which men said then, and still are saying, is too good to be true. He came here teaching a doctrine concerning God which was marvellously in advance of all that had been held by the wisest and best of men; making full and constant and emphatic declaration of his paternal relation to the souls of men, and of his fatherly affection for them. This

was the burden of his message, the Gospel — the good news of God — which man, as lost, needed to know, and to receive which filially was repentance, rebirth, and salvation. He makes it the first condition of prayer that men shall recognize the relationship. He bids men rely with utter confidence upon God's paternal forecast. He commands them to be perfect, because it becomes children to be in moral resemblance to their father. In every way he displays this fact, and urges it home: that with God is the real paternity of human souls, of which the tenderest and most gracious fatherhood of earth is but a reflection. How does it bear on this question of immortality? Let us take our Lord's own method of appealing to life: "What man of you, being a father, if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone?" What man of you, being a father, having a child that is obedient and dutiful, trustful and companionable, whose infancy you have tenderly nursed, and whose maturing years are repaying you a thousand-fold for all your

anxious thought, would be willing to have that life — the offspring of your own life — end in utter extinction, supposing that you yourself were immortal? Why, you cannot contemplate the separation of a little while without a great sinking at your heart. How anxiously you guard against every fatal probability! How even the slightest cause for fear invades your slumber and holds your eyes waking! No, no! You cannot bear that that life should even seem to come to pause in death. With all the tender consolations of your Christian faith, with all the promises of hope, your parental affection shudders and shrinks, and absolutely refuses, until it is compelled, to contemplate even the apparent cessation of life. But if the child be undutiful, disobedient, ungrateful, rebellious, does that alter the matter? No, only to make you all the more unwilling. Now, if Christ meant what he said, what must we believe concerning the intensity of that passion which burns at the paternal heart of God! And for every spirit that he has brought into

being. No such thing as extinction is possible for the soul of man.

III. My third point is the fact that man at his highest and best has the clear conviction of his own immortality. As one has said: "It would seem that the highest and holiest soul carries with it, like an atmosphere, a perfect serenity, a sense of present eternity, a presage of immortality." That sense is the perpetual sunlight which crowns the higher moral summits. We find the higher souls, and our own souls in their higher experiences, never stopping to question about it. It does not occur to them to doubt. It is a quiet, all-day-long assumption, to which life chords itself. The man who lives a grave-digger's life among mortalities easily comes to question whether there be anything that is not mortal. Our doubts of unending life grow out of our earthiness. Our souls attach themselves to things, and become scented with their decay. Man invests himself in death and then feels that he is dying. Let him, in like manner, invest himself in life, and

he becomes clearly conscious that he cannot die. The sense of immortality is the blossom of the spiritual nature, with which that nature expands when it has pushed up through the dirt. Our Saviour clearly intimated this when he said: "Whosoever believeth hath eternal life." That blessedness is the coronation of the soul's highest mood and endeavor — faith; which is the spirit's walk and conversation among the things that are not measured by feet and inches nor by days and hours, which are not to be described under any material terms, and are, therefore, not subject to material change or law. Love, purity, patience, reverence, lowliness before God, peace, righteousness — the things which make the climate and atmosphere of eternity. I am well aware that this can be no proof, and can hardly be called an argument for any who stand themselves outside of this experience. As Dr. Bushnell says: "The faith of immortality depends on a sense of it begotten, not in an argument for it concluded." In other words,

let any man for himself once lay hold upon the best things, and he will find his intuitions brighten and grow clear. "Born from above," he will "see the kingdom of God."

These, I think, are the best reasons for believing in man's deathlessness, but there are a multitude of others. The argument is not simple, but composite — like a cable which is braided of many strands, which again are twisted from innumerable fibres. You can unbraid, untwist them, but it is a long process. Together they make a band which the pertinacious confidence of mankind declares has never been broken. Men will still hold by it, I think, no matter how many improbabilities are piled upon it to try its tension. There is the fact of man's universal eagerness to know — man's universal truth-hunger, which no earthly acquisition can satisfy — his partial vision here, which needs some unknown quantity to balance and complete it — the conviction that somewhere absolute truth must be awaiting his approach, and that he must come to it. He has wings that are eager

for flight, made for flight; eyes that long for fuller vision, made for fuller vision. There must be some atmosphere in which these wings shall play, some light in which these eyes shall see, or God has made our human souls in vain, and the gift of conscious being is to every soul an act of mighty injustice. These things are prophetic. They are small matters now, but they are small just as are the folded buds along the winter's bough. They hold the slumbering glories of an immortal summer. There must be — and it is not profane to say it — there must be some self-vindication of God's moral character — some upheaving, some theodicy — which is beyond any possible construction here. The vast majority of the human race, — God's children, spirits begotten of his spirit, — myriads on myriads, through ages and millenniums, have lived in hunger of body, of mind, of heart and soul, and have died questioning and unsatisfied. There must be another chapter to the history, or God there is none.

But, away from all this, we turn with inexpressible relief, with perfect satisfaction, to Him who hath brought life and immortality to light. Rush lights thrust into a grave do not dispel much of its gloom. In fact, it is not the grave that needs the illumination, but the inmost soul of man. Man carries his light in his darkness within himself; the grave is just as bright as the fireside for the soul which is kindled within with the love of God, of Christ, of truth and purity and righteousness. "In thy light shall we see light." "Because thou livest, we shall live also."

J. E. Herrick

Pastor of the Mt. Vernon Church (Congregational-Trinitarian), Boston.

THE TEACHINGS OF CHRIST

THE STRONGEST PROOF OF IMMORTALITY.

1. THE intense longing for immortality which I find in my own being is an argument for continued existence. It seems satanic that the hunger and thirst of the body should be met, the cravings of the intellect be in a measure satisfied, and the longings of the soul be revoked. The more brutal a man becomes, the less real does the hope become. The more spiritual, the more real. I count it an argument in favor of immortality that the highest types of character have believed it most firmly, and the realization seems to be proportioned by spiritual growth.

2. I accept Jesus Christ as a historical character, a specialist, if you will, in spiritual things. His life and resurrection are an argument in favor of immortality. His interpretations of the Old Testament and

teachings in the New certainly confirm the hope of immortality. To me, the teachings of Christ are the strongest proof of immortality.

3. I accept Paul as a historical character, his epistles as authentic and genuine. The relations existing between the soul of man and the spirit of God, as set forth by Paul, confirm the longing of the soul and the teachings of the Christ.

The change wrought in a man's life when the "works of the flesh" give way to "the fruit of the spirit" argues spiritual life beyond the grave. Trusting my own soul, accepting the truth as Christ taught it, and the truth as Paul set it forth, I believe in the immortality of *my soul*.

I believe that Christ and Paul both taught that the soul of a man rejecting the truth is immortal also, though that rejection reach the point of denying Christ's authority and God's existence.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "O. S. Gifford." The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned centrally below the main text.

Pastor of the Warren Avenue Baptist Church, Boston.

DOWN TO "BEDROCK."

AN INWROUGHT AND INERADICABLE CON- VICTION.

YOU ask what are the strongest proofs and arguments in support of the belief in a life hereafter. I have only time to answer briefly : —

1. The common consent of all mankind, in every age and land, ancient as well as modern, pagan as well as Christian. Call this an intuition, or what you please, it is an inwrought and ineradicable conviction, which as conclusively points to an objective reality as the perturbations of Uranus pointed to Neptune, "lying out there in the cold."

2. All the arguments that go to prove the existence of God. For if there be a God, endowed with such attributes as are essential to our very conception of his character, then there arises an invincible

presumption, not to say a moral necessity, for him to provide a future state for the rectification of the inequalities and injustices of the present state. If there be a God, and a God of truth and justice, then there must be a future state. With a man who is an atheist, if, indeed, there be such a man, of which I have the gravest doubts, I would have no contention, for such a man, who, in the midst of such a universe, can turn away from it all, and say in his heart, "There is no God," is simply a poor fool, upon whom all argument would be wasted.

3. All the arguments that go to prove the truth of the Bible. For, if there be anything upon which the Bible is unmistakably explicit, it is in its answer to the question before us. These arguments for the truth of the Bible have been so frequently and fully formulated as to make an attempted recapitulation of them unnecessary here. For their proper presentation, one would want a volume rather than a quarter of a column.

Suffice it to say that, if the Bible could be shown to be false, the proofs of a life hereafter drawn from the constitution of our nature and the constitution of the universe would still remain. But if the Bible can be shown to be true, as it can be by a resistless array of arguments, then a life hereafter is beyond all question.

A thousand lines of subtle metaphysical argument might be presented and prosecuted to prove the probability of a future state. I do not concern myself with them, nor do they commend themselves to common minds, nor are they quite conclusive to the minds of those who urge them.

It seems to me to be better to rest our conclusions upon "bedrock" rather than to allow our thoughts to be confused by doubtful speculations; and if such lines of argument as I have indicated be not bedrock, then I know not where to find it in the universe of God.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "D. H. Munson". The script is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Pastor First Baptist Church, Chicago.

DESTRUCTION OF MAN'S BEING.

AN IDEA IN VIOLATION OF ALL THE LAWS
OF THE UNIVERSE.

MY health and the pressure of official duties compel me to write briefly.

1. Man is a complex being, of body and soul. This is proved by self-consciousness. All human responsibility recognizes the will of the soul, which directs the deeds of the body.

2. Our personality, which is unlike any other being who has lived, or will live, has, in the gift of memory and the preservation of our identity under all changes of body and soul, the prophecy of a future life.

3. The ethical side of our nature, in its conception of right and wrong, which is common to all men, would be only prudence or imprudence if there is no immortality.

4. True philosophy forbids the thought

that this identity which is seen in man's intellectual and spiritual life is ended at death. We can conceive of no waste so frightful as the destruction of man's being, and this idea is in violation of all the laws of the universe.

5. The universality of the belief in a future life is a strong proof of the fact.

6. We cannot conceive of design without a designer, of creation without a creator, of law without a lawgiver. It impugns the wisdom of God to suppose that a being which he has endowed with such marvellous powers is created to perish.

7. If God, who has filled the universe with his bounty, can feel pity for men who sin and suffer, he must give to them the revelation of his will. This revelation, which is complete in a Saviour, is the outcome of the possibility that God can love.

8. Life and immortality are made certain by the resurrection of Jesus Christ. No fact of history can bring more indubitable proof.

9. Friends and foes have through eigh-

teen hundred years weighed and sifted evidence, and the Gospels have vindicated their authenticity and genuineness.

10. The witnesses of Christ's resurrection were competent and credible, and they sealed their testimony with their blood. In an open letter, which all scholars admit, St. Paul wrote within forty years after the crucifixion. He says there were then living over two hundred and fifty men who had seen Jesus Christ after he arose from the dead.

11. Since the world began, no man has ever heard of a body of men conspiring to tell a falsehood when every man of that company knew that that falsehood would overwhelm him in ruin.

12. The answer made by the chief priests to this witness of the apostles confirms the truth of the resurrection. There never were men who had so much at stake as these priests. If on the fourth day they could show the body of Jesus, they were vindicated forever, and Jesus would stand out through all the centuries as a Jewish

enthusiast and impostor. They had everything in their favor. He was dead. His grave stood solitary and alone. It was sealed with the Roman seal and guarded by the veteran soldiers of the world, with the light of an eastern sun by day and the light of a paschal moon by night. The third day the grave was empty. The explanation of the chief priests, the moment it was uttered, was indelibly stamped as falsehood. They said that within three days the virgin mother and the men and women whose hearts were wrung with anguish conspired together to take the body of the one they loved, out of its honored resting-place in a nobleman's tomb, and carry it to a nameless potter's field.

13. Thousands of the men who consented to the death of Jesus Christ were so convinced of the truth of his resurrection that they gave up all that men hold dear, and life itself, to become the followers of the risen Saviour.

14. The resurrection of Jesus Christ has brought life and immortality to light. It

fulfils the hopes and aspirations of men. It preserves all that is dearest in human affections. It gives purpose and dignity to life. Different as men are in intellectual gifts, there is one side of our nature which is the same in the humblest child of toil as in the greatest scholar. They all sin and suffer, and the Christian revelation of eternal life through a risen Saviour is the best news this world has ever heard.

15. Atheism answers no questions, fulfils no hopes. It puts out our eyes and leaves us blind and in the dark. Man cannot protect his social relations without accountability to an unseen power. No nation has survived the loss of its religion. The necessity of an eternal law of morals, outside of man's changing will, is inextricably bound up with the truth of immortality.

16. There are clouds which linger and which no human eye can pierce, else there were no room for that loving, loyal faith which brings out all that is gentlest, purest, and noblest in human character. The

Christian faith rests on eternal truths. We know in whom we believe. We are not going to a world of bodiless shades, but to our Father's home, where we shall know and be known in all the certainty and beatitude of a perfect recognition, and there, in the light of our Father's love, the tangled webs which have perplexed us will all be made plain.

H. B. Whipple

Bishop (Episcopal) of Minnesota.

THE IDEA OF ANNIHILATION.

DREAD RESULTS OF FOLLOWING OUT ITS LOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE.

I REGARD the question of life hereafter as a question decided by the spiritual quality of individual character, rather than by the strength of any special argument. A man's inner certainty that his life extends beyond the grave is the product of a spiritual condition, and not of an intellectual assent to the force of any logically worked-out chain of reasoning. The Christian religion seeks to develop this productive spiritual condition in which the consciousness of personal immortality is a necessary, essential element. When a man denies that there is an immortal principle in his personality, the only way to make him change his denial into belief is to make him *feel himself immortal*; and the way to acquire that sense of deathlessness

is to open his nature to the influences of Christ's personality and his teaching about life; that is to say, to develop his own personality and his conceptions of the sentiments, affections, and duties which belong to it, in association with the personality of Jesus as depicted in the Gospels. To enter with vital sympathy into the mind of Christ, to see life as revealed in that atmosphere, is to incorporate into one's self a spiritual quality which instinctively seizes upon the conviction of immortality as a necessity of one's very being. One may hold a belief in life after death on the strength of some argument only; but in that case he can hold his belief only so long as he encounters no stronger argument on the negative side. This is the inevitable condition of merely intellectual belief in all spiritual truths. And in the intellectual sphere the arguments for and against immortality — from Plato to our day — are so numerous and so varied in degrees of strength that there is no assurance that the belief resting on any

of them may not be overthrown at a moment's notice, unless the intellectual believer is sure that the special argument upon which he rests his belief is stronger than any conceivable argument which can be brought against it. I confess I know of no such invulnerable argument on the affirmative side. It is quite possible that a materialistic lecturer, equipped with the latest conclusion of some atheistic scientist, might be able in an hour to sweep from every mind in his audience their belief in immortal life, simply because their purely mental hold on the doctrine was necessarily at the mercy of any strong novel attack. A *spiritual* hold on immortality is altogether another thing. Not having been generated by the strength of any argument in its favor, it, therefore, cannot be shaken by any stronger argument opposed to it. Such a believer is unwounded on any intellectual battle-field. His faith is a pervading element in his personality; it enters into all his ideas of the significance

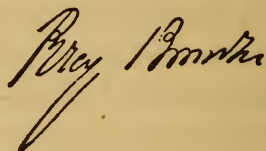
of life. It is because he feels an eternal quality in his life here on earth that he finds the idea of life eternal after death a natural unshaken consciousness in his deepest self.

Of course, there are degrees of strength in the many proofs which are urged in support of the doctrine of a life hereafter, but I must confess my inability to select any one or more of them as the most invulnerable. None of them is without flaw, and the strongest on the affirmative side to-day may have no strength against some new argument on the negative side to-morrow. Believers in immortality may read such proofs with pleasurable interest, but with no sense of dependence upon them for a conviction, which, as I said, is an essential fact of their spiritual nature, developed in them by their association with the spirit of Christ, who brought immortality to light; and, on the other hand, no real denier is ever convinced by them.

It might, however, be of use for the sincere doubter to engage in one strictly

logical exercise. It is this: Let him accept the idea of annihilation, and then follow out its relentless logical significance into all departments of personal life. Let him look, with honest mind, at what it says of the nature and significance of what we call duty and love and self-sacrifice; let him accept its stern deliverance touching the extinction by death of everything that gives glory, beauty, and meaning to human character; and then let him try to adapt himself—all his hopes and feelings—to that aspect of personal destiny. Let him do this with sincere determination, unrelieved by adjacent Christian sentiment, which so often disguises the real significance of doubt. Let him try to live logically as a believer in annihilation; let it shape his idea of his relation to his friends, his children, and humanity at large; let it shape his thoughts about those whom death takes from his side; let him, I say, conform utterly to the idea of annihilation—not in a half-sentimental way, but absolutely; and then, perhaps,

when he experiences that devastating creed, clouding every sacred fellowship of life with the idea of speedy termination, and chilling every noble ardor of the soul with the irony of death, he might find in his bleak experience an argument, not, indeed, sufficient to create faith in eternal life, but strong enough to turn him toward the idea of it, with, at least, a desire that it might be true. And when that desire stirs in the soul, it is, I must think, the beginning of that development of the spiritual nature which grows into the unshaken conviction that there is a life beyond the grave.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Percy Ancker". The script is fluid and cursive, with a large, sweeping initial 'P' and a long, trailing flourish at the end.

Rector St. James' Church (Episcopal), Boston.

LIFE HEREAFTER

NOT A DISCOVERY OF ANYBODY WHO EVER
WAS HERE ONLY.

YOU have asked me for no new thing when you ask, "What are the strongest proofs and arguments in support of the belief in a life hereafter?" There are some truths to which formal logic will never lead. There are truths which cannot be mathematically demonstrated. If I had to depend upon a process of reasoning to believe some things which are indubitably true, I never could believe. There is a great deal of confusion in our talking, if not in our thinking, these days, when we use the words *knowledge* and *belief*. There are just as many things *believed* as are *known*. The one set of things may be as true as the other:

There are some things we never would know if we were never told them. We come

into this world knowing so little that, if we were never told anything, we would go out of it much as we came into it. I do not believe that "life hereafter" is a discovery of anybody who is here, or anybody who ever was *here only*.

Natural theology only does not furnish any one satisfactory proof or argument for immortality. "I hope," said Socrates, "I am now going to good men, though this I would not take upon me positively to affirm." "Which of these," said Cicero (referring to the two theories, of life or no life after death), "God only knows; and which is most probable a very great question." Seneca said: "Immortality, however desirable, was rather promised than proved by great men." I am prone to attach to the rational method much importance, but I do not believe pure reasoning, aside from revelation, ever could reveal immortality. Recent discussions which have pursued this method, in Germany, England, France, and America, result in about as much scepticism and as little knowledge as the ancients had.

I therefore believe any simply rational doctrine of immortality "a vague and ill-built" observation.

"Immortality," says Channing, "is the glorious discovery of Christianity." And Paul, to Timothy, said: "Jesus Christ hath abolished death and hath brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel." My "strongest proofs and arguments in support of the belief in a life hereafter," as of every other man who knows anything of immortality, are taken from revelation. Once the doctrine is revealed, I believe in the rational method and all evidence to be gathered from everywhere for verification. And the collateral and corroborative testimony to the truth of the revelation is widespread and far-reaching.

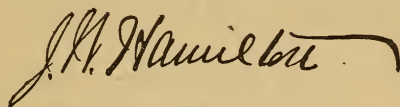
My first proof, first argument, then, must come from the New Testament; this must have primary importance. All instances of life after death which are there cited are *prima-facie* evidence; all testimony of Jesus, the evangelists, and apostles are matters for faith.

My next proof, next argument, the corroborative one, is the universal desire to live after death. "All men," says Theodore Parker, "desire to be immortal." The New Testament is verified.

Then follows the almost universal expectation of men everywhere that they will live after death — the ignorant, the pagan, the infidel. Thomas Paine has inscribed upon his tombstone, at New Rochelle, N. Y., these words, taken from one of his books: "I . . . hope for happiness beyond this life." The Bible is verified.

The purely philosophical argument is: There can be no moral system which is not based upon a future life. All ethics must look to the future life for justification. There can be no obligations to goodness, no evidence anywhere of justice, if man does not live after death. In the light of the future life, I would then appeal to "consciousness, conscience, and all the great principles on which life and society and government are founded," for ethical unity and harmony.

In the light of the New Testament this life teaches another life, this world another world.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "J. H. Hamilton". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending from the end of the name.

Pastor of the First Methodist Episcopal Church, Somerville, Mass.

WITHIN EACH HUMAN BREAST

THE REAL ARGUMENT AND SOLE PROOF
ARE FOUND.

BEING a very busy man, nothing but the magic of a friend's name would induce me to reply to your question asking for "proofs and arguments in support of a belief in a life hereafter."

You do not say "immortality," which I consider a very different thing from a "continuance of life."

The nearest argument is the very fact that such a question is asked, for it is impossible that it should be asked unless man had an intuition that such continuance is a law. The next is that there is a wide-spread belief in it; the belief in the opposite is held by only a few. The next is that all scriptures, in every age, declare it, in one way or another. Then, many have affirmed a knowledge of it; and there

is an undoubted mass of facts showing that *something* persists after death which bears some insignia of identity — as among the Spiritualists. But for me these are only facts whose tendency as proof is only cumulative. Indeed, were I driven to the wall, I must admit that the real argument and sole proof are found within each human breast. I need no proof or argument from without, because I inwardly know that the belief in life after death of the body is true ; for I start with the premise — well known in occultism and to theosophists — that the body is only a small portion of the man, and that, when the body dies, the man himself *is not yet really dead* ; he has other organs and other sorts of bodies, which have to die in their turn.

Your readers either have or have not introspective experience. If they have, they will need no argument to support this belief ; if they have not, no argument will convince them.

On this subject we can only tell you that

which you already know — it cannot be new; and if you don't believe it, it is because not yet has dawned within you the belief in a fact which at some period in your evolution — be it ages hence — will force itself upon you.

William D. Judge, F.F.S.

New York.

A STRONG ARGUMENT.

WE DO NOT HERE ATTAIN OUR FULL
MORAL AND INTELLECTUAL STATURE.

You ask me, "What are the strongest proofs and arguments in support of the belief in a life hereafter?"

In reply I would say that I attach weight to all the arguments commonly presented in defence of the doctrine of a future life. They are not, of course, to be taken as proof positive, because the future life lies out of our personal experience. They form together a system of lines converging to a common centre, and affording a high presumption of the truth of the fact toward which they point.

1. The belief of mankind in all ages, a belief to all intents and purposes universal, can best be explained upon the

assumption of a primitive instinct to which the fact corresponds. We cannot believe that a conviction so interwoven with the very fibres of our moral and religious being can deceive us. With good reason Kant made immortality one of the three postulates of the practical reason, of the same rank with the doctrines of God and freedom.

2. Then, to every one except the materialist, there is force in the argument derived from the unity and indivisibility of the soul. Self-consciousness reveals in the human personality the one absolute unity of which we have any knowledge. Death means for the body dissolution and disintegration. But how can they befall the indivisible unity of the soul? I do not regard this argument as affording anything more than a presumption. Its value appears only when taken in connection with the other arguments.

3. The fact that we do not attain in this life the full intellectual and moral stature which belong to us is a strong ar-

gument that the process will be continued in another life. We are cut off just when we begin to be ready to do something in the world. We are like plants in an inhospitable climate, which bear leaves and blossoms, but no fruit. Nature cannot do her work in vain. There must be some clime where we can bear our fruit.

4. Nor would I leave out what is called the moral argument. Our moral nature declares that there is a fixed connection between goodness and happiness, between wrong-doing and suffering. In this world, however, this connection is not consistently maintained. Virtue suffers. Vice wins the great prizes. There must be a world where the adjustment will be made, where every man will get his due.

5. Then, look at man himself. In the human personality we have something different from everything else in the world, higher and more valuable. One man is worth more than continents of matter. Such a creature will not be allowed to perish like the beasts. I ask with

John Fiske : " Are we to regard the Creator's work as like that of a child who builds houses out of blocks just for the pleasure of knocking them down ? " And, like Fiske, I find in the theory of evolution one of the chief supports of this argument.

6. But the highest and most satisfactory evidence, to my mind, is that which Christianity furnishes. The fact that immortality is an essential part of that wonderful system of truth which Christ has given to mankind weighs so strongly with me that I am almost tempted to speak of it as proof positive. It becomes practically so when a man has come to the personal knowledge of God in Christ. Christian experience is a reality, with a certainty of its own, not less real than that which is produced by other kinds of experience. He who lives the life of faith is already a partaker of eternal life. " And this is life eternal, that they should know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." (John xvii. 3.)

But the man who has eternal life now cannot doubt that he will have it hereafter.

Lewis F. Stearns.

Professor of Systematic Theology, Bangor Theological Society, Bangor, Me.

NOT THINKABLE.

IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO CONCEIVE OF EXTINCTION OF BEING.

THE question to which you solicit an answer is one of supreme importance. "What are the strongest proofs and arguments in support of the belief in a life hereafter?" I can, in a brief newspaper article, name only a few of the many evidences and arguments which appeal to my own mind as irrefragable proofs: —

1. The essential life of man inheres in his mental and spiritual, and not in his material organism. The child grows because he lives; he does not live because he grows. My body is not *me*, it is *mine*. We recognize this central truth, even in the common language of life. I say my hand, my head, my body. No single member of my body is *me*, nor are all the members

combined. They are all *mine*. Then, who am I, who own, use, and control these physical members, through which I communicate with the material world? I am a living, thinking, loving, and aspiring soul. I shall lay aside this material garment by and by. But the change will not necessarily involve death, any more than I necessarily die when I lay aside my garments for my nightly repose. All the life that the body has to-day, it derives from the soul. It lives and moves, urged on by the invisible life. If the soul is capable of animating the body and giving it life, it may live independent of the body. If the soul is capable of weaving for itself this visible garment, it may weave another garment when it lays this worn-out body down. These are only hints at arguments, which might be extended indefinitely, and buttressed until they would be impregnable as Gibraltar.

2. We find evidence of a life hereafter in the circumstance that we cannot even think annihilation. I state, without hesi-

tation, the proposition that extinction of being is not thinkable. If any one does not agree with me, let him sit down and deliberately try to think himself out of existence. He may imagine his body torn to atoms, burnt to ashes, scattered to the four winds of heaven. But thought is not extinguished. In spite of himself, he is there in thought, looking upon the ruin. No man ever did, or ever can, think thought out of existence. Now, it is difficult for us to believe that what we cannot even think can ever be.

3. The almost universal belief in a life hereafter affords evidence approaching demonstration of a future life. Perhaps I ought to say the universal belief; for if there are cases of absolute unbelief, they are so rare as only to emphasize the rule. It were strange, indeed, that universal man has conceived the thought, the expectation of a life beyond the grave, if the grave ends all. What ever put that idea into the human mind, if it is only a lie, a cheating delusion?

4. Added to this expectation, we have an ardent desire for immortality. All men certainly want to live on. If they could have their way, death would not be the end. Now, want is a prophecy of destiny. So perfectly has the Creator adjusted his universe that there is no want for which no provision has been made. This truth finds illustrations in every department of nature. Plant a seed in the earth, and, under the fostering influence of the elements, it germinates. A root strikes downward, seeking something — seeking moisture. Moisture *is*. It does not go out in quest of something that does not exist, but of something that does exist. The blade comes upward, seeking something — air and sunlight. Air and sunlight are. God has made provision for this want of the growing corn. So of every creature that lives. You cannot conceive of any want of a fish that swims, or a beast that roams, or a bird that flies, for which no provision has been made. It may not be able to reach out and take on the instant that which it desires.

But there is somewhere in the universe that which will answer its every want. Take the physical wants of man as an illustration. He is hungry, and the earth teems with abundance. He is thirsty, and a spring bubbles at his feet. He desires companionship, and friends are all about him, to share his love and to return their own. It is not possible to conceive of any material want of man for which no provision has been made. And is it rational to believe, when the Creator of the universe — whether you call that Creator mind or law — has so carefully adjusted things that, in plant and animal and man, want and supply balance each other, so that there is no natural desire which may not somewhere find its natural gratification, that when we come to the higher wants of man, the wants of his mind, his heart, his soul, the law breaks, and for his most central and essential desire there is no provision whatever? Better say, in the name of science, that all the planets spin and shine, moved on and illuminated by attraction and light,

but that there is no sun which is the source of that light and attraction, than to say, either in the name of science or religion, that, while man has this hunger for immortality, there is for him no such experience as an immortal life. The same line of argument which supports the general doctrine of immortality proves equally a blessed immortality, not only for us, but for our friends and for all God's children. If I desire immortal life at all, I desire that it may be a good and a blessed life. And if I desire to live hereafter at all, I would have my friends to share it with me. And if I am a Christian, this same good which I crave for myself and my friends I would see extended to every rational creature of God.

5. Another impregnable argument might be built upon the tenacity with which man clings to his own identity. He not only wants to live, but he would live in his essential selfhood. He would not, if he could, sink himself, his consciousness, his memory, his personality, into that of any

other man or even angel. He may covet the wealth, or the position, the knowledge, the power, the fame of another. But he would carry his own conscious personality into that position; *he* would enjoy that wealth, or knowledge, or fame. Why were we endowed with this intense clinging, not to life alone, but to our own conscious personal life, if it may be to-morrow or next year, and surely will be in a few years, snuffed out like an expiring lamp?

6. The conscious assurance of immortality which comes to most men as they draw near the close of mortal life is not without significance as bearing on this question. I have for many years been often with the sick and dying, and I have never known a man to go out of life expressing doubts of a life to come. I have known men who, during health and in the earlier stages of disease, expressed doubts of a hereafter. But invariably, so far as my observation extends, these men, as mortal strength ebbed away, let go their doubts, and grew into the satisfying faith of an

immortal life. At the last they were ready, without a doubt, or fear, or tear, to meet the marvellous change. It would seem as if the direct opposite must be the case if faith in a hereafter be a delusion. It would seem as if the dream of a future life — if it be a dream — would lose its spell upon us as we approach and face the awful fact of annihilation. How shall we account for the exultation which many experience in death — sometimes even little children — and the angels whom they see about their beds, except on the supposition that ministering spirits do come to waft their spirits home? And how shall we account for that consciousness of immortality which so many experience, and which seems as real as any other truth of consciousness, save on the ground that it is a blessed foretaste of a real inheritance?

7. These views of nature are all confirmed by the teachings of revelation. Standing at the graves of their friends, the ancients were accustomed to say, in the anguish of their spirits: “There is hope of

a tree, if it be cut down, that it will sprout again ; but man dieth and wasteth away, yea, man giveth up the ghost, and where is he ?” They saw that nature did not die. “The teil tree and the oak” retained their “substance when they cast their leaves.” And so the question rose in their minds : “Is man less than a tree ?” “Where is he when the body drops like a fading leaf, or as the tree falls before the strokes of the woodman’s axe ?” This question was answered at the open tomb of Christ. The angels who had guarded that tomb said to the inquiring women : “He is not here, but is risen.” And the Master, who had been crucified, appeared to them, and talked with them, and showed them his hands and his side, and so thoroughly convinced them and all of his disciples that “He who lived and was dead was now alive forevermore,” that, in the strength of this conviction, they rallied from their despair and went forth to conquer the world to Christ. There is no other fact of ancient history which is sustained by such an array of evidence, exter-

nal and internal, as the life, death, and resurrection of Christ. For every doubt which can be thrown upon it, an equal doubt can be thrown upon the life of Cæsar or Alexander or Napoleon. He was a man, our brother. He lived a life akin to ours. He died, as we must all die. He lives, and so in him we have evidence that we shall live. He is the first fruits of the harvest. Not first to live beyond death, as all the sons of Adam before him had risen above the shock of dissolution, but first to gain full perfection of life, and a pledge that the other members of God's rational family shall gain full perfection of life. And so the believing disciple can say, with all the assurance of St. Paul of old, "We know that if this earthly house of our tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." Yes, we know it from the intuitions and aspirations of our own souls, from the teachings of revelation, from the resurrection of the man Christ Jesus, and from daily communion which many of us

feel with our friends who have passed on out of sight, and “with the spirits of just men made perfect in heaven.”

A. J. Peterson

Pastor First Universalist Church, Boston.

INCOMPLETENESS OF THIS LIFE.

GREAT CAPACITIES IN MAN WHICH DEMAND FULFILMENT.

THE arguments in support of the intuitive conviction of immortality, which is an endowment of human nature itself, are many. No wise man will make light of any of them ; he will rather feel that each strengthens the rest, and that all together make a twisted chain, which compels the reason and the faith.

The Christian bases his reasonable trust on the Gospel. There is not one of the promises of Jesus Christ which has not stayed the bleeding wounds of countless hearts, not a chapter of the New Testament which is not transfigured by the underlying faith in immortality ; and, back of all these, as the evidence for this immortal expectation, is the solid fact of Jesus Christ himself. His life, lived in the sight of

men, and manifestly full of an undying spirit, is as real as any fact of science ; his rising from the dead is attested by companions who died to affirm it, and vouched for by the existence of the Christian church, which would be a continuous miracle, eighteen hundred years long, if it did not touch that fact at the beginning.

But the proof which Christianity gives of immortality rests on a broader and deeper foundation than isolated texts alone, or even than the Gospel record and the visible church. It is in the whole spirit of the religion which Jesus taught and the new spirit which he breathed into humanity. Yet the Christian faith in immortality does not disparage the arguments from natural religion. They are worth much as illustrations and probabilities, while yet they become brighter with the light reflected back upon them from Christianity. The analogies from processes of nature appeal to the imagination — *i. e.*, to the poetic side of the mind. They are images of what we would gladly hope is repeated in a

diviner way with man. The earth's waking from winter's sleep, flooded with light and joy and life; the insect fluttering forth in beauty from the grave it had spun for itself when a chill wind smote it, — these are gracious emblems of the diviner spring of the soul, of the spirit rising again. But the force of such illustrations depends largely on our mood. A cold and cloudy day, or an overcast spirit, may abash our confidence.

The argument from the incompleteness of the present life has a higher value. At the best, this life is broken and partial, with aspirations which cannot be satisfied and powers which can never find adequate use unless beyond the narrow horizon of earth. "Man can only be reckoned on any ground as a *provisionally* successful work — successful, that is, provided we regard him as *in transitu*, on his way to another and far more perfect stage of development." Nor are these capacities which demand fulfilment elsewhere only a dream of our weaker moments; they are an instinct, strongest

when men are at their best. If immortality were a delusion, the persons deceived would be the noblest of our race, and their leader, Christ, in the solemn pathos of his cross, would be but the loftiest victim. Would God himself be perfect wisdom and perfect truth if he permitted men to labor under an impossible hope, just in proportion to the height they reached?

These considerations are touched with living power by the Christian doctrine of the worth of the human soul as a being capable of communion with God, and loved by him. Could Abraham or Jacob, in their night-watch under the Chaldean sky, have wrung from the pitying stars the secret of the Divine Name if they were to live scarcely longer than their bleating flocks? Can they who have once drunk at the immortal fountain of the Divine Presence become a handful of dust, dry as the desert sands they used to cross? The love of the creature of a day could hardly reach to the Infinite and Eternal and win his answering care; nor could the qualities of an atom

“crushed before the moth” image to us the Power who is “from everlasting to everlasting.” The fact, then, that men can know Him by faith is a proof of their immortality, for how could they know one to whom they were not akin? In that contact with God the soul is a “partaker of the Divine Nature,” and he is brought into such connection with the lives of men that they must share his Infinite Life.

All these considerations justify that strong word of Emerson: “I have always thought that faith in immortality was a proof of the sanity of a man’s nature.”

Henry W. Fook-

*Pastor of King’s Chapel (Congregational-Unitarian),
Boston.*

THE RELIGIOUS INSTINCT.

A MATTER IN WHICH NATURE NEVER DE-
CEIVES ANY OF HER CHILDREN.

To my mind, the strongest arguments for the doctrine of immortality are the following: —

First — The universal presence of this which Emerson calls “man’s audacious belief in a future life.” “In the minds of all men, or wherever man appears,” says Emerson, “this belief appears with him — in the savage, savagely; in the pure, purely.”

Second — The fact that nature never deceives any of her children in the matter of instinct. The mole burrows; the water-fowl flies south at the approach of winter; the bull calf butts with smooth and unarmed brow. Safety is found in all animal life by obeying the animal instincts. Yet man is the only creature which has the religious

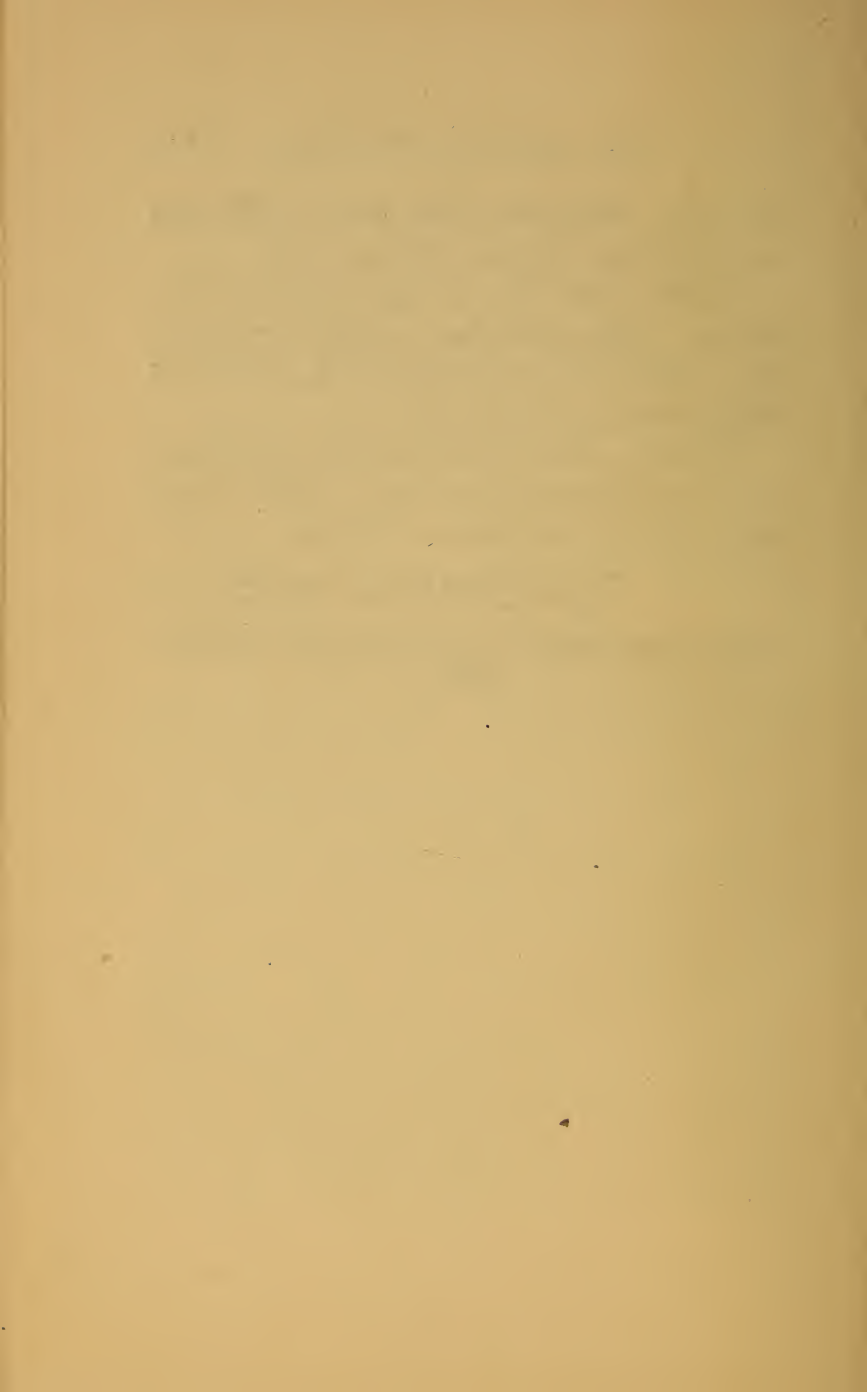
instinct. Therefore, God must be the end to which the religious instinct leads.

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*Rector of St. Stephen's Church (Episcopal), Pittsfield,
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